



Office of the Governor

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
THE PEOPLE'S GOVERNOR

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Press Release

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Gov. Schwarzenegger Proclaims State of Emergency in 10 Counties, Asks For Expedited Treatment of Requests for Federal Aid for Farmers

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Gov. Schwarzenegger issued the following proclamation today in the counties of Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Tulare and Ventura resulting from severe freezing conditions. Additional counties will be added to the proclamation as warranted.

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The Governor also directed the Director of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services and the Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture to request immediate assistance from the United States Department of Food and Agriculture and federal Small Business Administration.

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A copy of the proclamation and a letter from the Governor to U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns asking for expedited treatment of requests for federal aid for farmers follow below:

PROCLAMATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY

WHEREAS on January 12, 2007 I proclaimed a state of emergency due to extreme low temperatures and freezing conditions beginning January 11, 2007 and continuing; and

WHEREAS the freezing conditions have continued for over five days and the National Weather Service predicts several more days of below freezing temperatures in several areas of the state; and

WHEREAS local agencies, non-profit organizations, and state agencies took actions to reduce the impact of the cold weather on homeless and medically fragile people by opening emergency warming shelters and providing other short-term relief, including the opening of additional National Guard Armories throughout the state; and

WHEREAS I directed local and state agencies to assist with efforts to protect crops and coordinate financial assistance efforts for agriculture and the industry that supports agriculture; and, to lessen the economic impact to the people who work in the agricultural industry; and

WHEREAS preliminary data indicates that there may be more than one billion dollars of damage to California agricultural products, including estimates of approximately \$700 million in damages to the citrus crop, and major damages to the avocado and the strawberry crops; and

WHEREAS as a result of the continued cold weather conditions, there is a need for further action by state government, including the Department of Food and Agriculture; and

WHEREAS the circumstances of this situation, by reason of their magnitude, are likely to be beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of any single county, city and county, or city and require the combined forces of a mutual aid region or regions to combat; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor of the State of California, find that conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property exist in the counties of Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Tulare, and Ventura resulting from these severe freezing conditions, and under the authority of the California Emergency Services Act, set forth at Title 2, Division 1, Chapter 7 of the California Government Code, commencing with section 8550, I hereby proclaim that a State of Emergency exists in these counties.

I HEREBY DIRECT all agencies of the state government to utilize and employ state personnel, equipment and facilities for the performance of any and all necessary activities to alleviate this emergency as directed by my Office of Emergency Services and in accordance with the State Emergency Plan.

I FURTHER DIRECT that the Director of the Office of Emergency Services activate the California Disaster Assistance Act to provide supplemental financial support for local government.

I FURTHER DIRECT the following:

The Secretary of the Department of Food and Agriculture will continue working with impacted farmers and ranchers to quickly assess damages so that financial and other assistance can promptly be made available.

The Director of the Office of Emergency Services and the Secretary of the Department of Food and Agriculture will send letters to the United States Department of Food and Agriculture and federal Small Business Administration requesting their immediate assistance.

The California Department of Health Services, the California Department of Social Services, and California Volunteers will continue working with local public health and social services agencies; and, with drinking water providers and health care facilities to assure people have critical services during these extreme weather conditions.

The California National Guard will continue to keep their Armories available to those in need while the extreme weather continues.

The California Highway Patrol and the Department of Transportation will continue to assure that roadways are safe.

I FURTHER DIRECT that as soon as hereafter possible, this proclamation be filed in the Office of the Secretary of State and that widespread publicity and notice be given of this proclamation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 16th day of January 2007.

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

Governor of California

ATTEST:

DEBRA BOWEN

Secretary of State

January 16, 2007

The Honorable Mike Johanns

Secretary of Agriculture

U.S. Department of Agriculture

1400 Independence Avenue, Southwest

Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary,

The State of California is currently experiencing severely low temperatures and record-setting freezing conditions, due to an arctic air mass that has stalled over the state. The National Weather Service forecast predicts that freezing conditions will continue through the middle of next week.

These extreme weather conditions have had a devastating impact on California's agricultural industry, exacting catastrophic losses on our citrus, avocado, vegetable and strawberry crops. California is the nation's number one producer of fresh citrus, and the damages to the citrus industry alone could surpass three-fourths of California's overall production. In many cases, only a small percentage of the crops were harvested when the freeze began, with the result being that some California growers are reporting a complete loss of their crop. With freeze conditions expected to continue, there is little hope for many of these growers. The financial losses to the agricultural industry will likely reach \$1 billion – an amount that will far surpass the damages sustained in California during the freeze disasters of 1990-1991 and 1998-1999.

Given the scope of this disaster, on January 12, 2007, I proclaimed a State of Emergency for all of California's 58 counties in order to protect our most vulnerable populations and direct key state agencies to take the necessary steps to ensure that all our residents are protected. Today, I am proclaiming a State of Emergency for the following ten counties due to the magnitude and duration of this agricultural disaster. These counties are Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Monterey, Tulare, Ventura, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara. We anticipate that more counties could be added as losses mount. My Office of Emergency Services (OES) and the California Department of Food and Agriculture are coordinating and communicating with the impacted counties at this time.

I am requesting that all petitions for assistance submitted on behalf of California's farmers and ranchers be immediately expedited by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and that favorable consideration be granted.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger

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